99 01064

INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES LIBRARY

APR 27 1998

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

State of the City Address
as delivered by
ELIHU M. HARRIS
Mayor, City of Oakland
Tuesday, April 21, 1998

As I reflect over the past 7 plus years, I remember the Oakland of 30 years ago as Oakland has been and continues to be a work in progress. Today, we see the transition.

- ✓ Oakland has moved from a manufacturing based economy to a service based economy
- ✓ There has been tremendous change in the demographics and infrastructure
- ✓ The electorate has changed from majority Republican to overwhelmingly Democrat
- ✓ Oakland has changed from homeowner to renter
- ✓ From Corporate and middle class abandonment
- ✓ Federal and State abandonment

But, a work in progress means that we are not finished nor are we satisfied. We are a city that is growing! A city that is learning! And, a city that is struggling. And I have tried to shepherd this progress.

We are in many ways a tale of two cities:

- ✓ Picturesque from flatlands to hills with great weather
- ✓ We have a world class port
- ✓ A tremendous waterfront
- ✓ We are a city of more than 85 neighborhoods and
- ✓ We are an All American City (Designated 1993)

Oakland is also a city with:

- ✓ Poverty
- ✓ A dearth of affordable housing
- ✓ A city with educational neglect
- ✓ A city where drugs and crime continue to mar the landscape and,
- ✓ An aging infrastructure

Being Mayor of this unique city is a tough job. No one knows better than I. Since day one, I have been criticized for being a strong Mayor in a weak Mayor form of government; or at the other extreme, not exercising enough leadership. Both criticisms have been valid and appropriate at one time or another.

Most recently, I have heard this criticism from some of the Mayoral candidates running to succeed me. Such criticism is neither surprising nor unusual. While criticism is welcome and necessary it is empty when not supported by real solutions, corrective changes and specific action plans. In short, talk is cheap. Local government is where the rubber meets the road.

Next year I will pass on the baton; and I urge our next Mayor to continue our work in progress – to build on the foundations we have laid.

Tremendous challenges await the next Mayor. For example,

- ✓ Drugs and crime
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Infrastructure
- ✓ Job Training and economic redevelopment, and
- ✓ Life enrichment

But, I believe that the people of our city will help our leadership meet these challenges. As in the past we have shown our ability to find creative and innovative approaches to issues facing Oakland; and have developed action plans such as:

- ✓ Oakland Sharing the Vision
- ✓ The General Plan
- ✓ Economic Development Strategy
- ✓ We Mean Clean
- ✓ A Community Policing Plan
- ✓ A Healthy Cities Plan
- ✓ A Citywide Youth Policy; and
- ✓ You responded to my call when I convened an Educational Summit

In the almost eight years that I have been Mayor, I have seen this City emerge from the rubble more times than I care to remember. Not only have we rebuilt, but we have built new and stronger foundations for the future.

We have a great community spirit. Our ability to move forward as a City has not been about me – but about we.

With your active participation and support the City of Oakland has made changes and developed new programs and engaged in projects to meet our needs. For example: Infrastructure

- ✓ This year we will complete the repaving of International Boulevard
- ✓ The City Administrative complex is scheduled for opening in September
- ✓ The renovation of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza is underway
- ✓ Completion of the Cypress Street Project
- ✓ Completion of the 43' Dredging Project – Have begun the 50' Dredging Project
- ✓ Mandela Parkway and Bancroft median strips are complete
- ✓ Developed an Estuary Plan
- ✓ Development of the General Plan with broad community participation
- ✓ The Airport and Maritime Expansion Plans are complete
- ✓ Have begun job training and placement programs/projects

We have addressed these issues of Public Safety:

- ✓ Community Policing is in place
- ✓ 3 Area Commanders
- ✓ 16 neighborhood Coordinators
- ✓ There are 57 Beat Patrols
- ✓ Home Alert and neighborhood watch is stronger than ever
- ✓ We have reopened old and built new fire stations

The result of our efforts – Major crime continues to decline with the homicide rate down 40% since I became Mayor in 1991.

The City also made strides in the competition of its Economic Development goals and objectives by:

- ✓ Constructing affordable housing
- ✓ Restoring more than 1,000 units for occupancy
- ✓ Revitalizing the Acorn Shopping and Housing Developments
- ✓ Victoria court
- ✓ In the last 4 years, the City of Oakland has been awarded in excess of $156 Million in Federal, State and local grants
- ✓ Mission Motel was torn down and MacArthur Park is in development

We have experienced growth in the retail segment with projects such as:

- ✓ The Bay Bridge Plaza
- ✓ Fruitvale Station
- ✓ Super K-Mart
- ✓ Auto Row
- ✓ New and improved Jack London Square

Oakland is also attracting new service based businesses such as:

- ✓ Telecommunications
- ✓ Software
- ✓ Engineering
- ✓ New hotels under development
- ✓ New IKEA – a major furniture retailer
- ✓ A Merchant Leadership Council organized restoration of historical buildings like: The Rotunda, Fox Theater, and the Tribune Tower

Other economic development projects and activities include:

- ✓ Oakland, San Leandro/Airport Gateway Project
- ✓ The launching of the Shop Oakland Campaign
- ✓ Oakland/San Leandro corridor partnership
- ✓ Neighborhood commercial revitalization across Airport Road
- ✓ Mac Arthur and East 14th Street Project

We are a city that cares about the Life Enrichment of its people. With your support we initiated the development of:

- ✓ New senior centers
- ✓ New libraries in the Rockridge and Brookfield neighborhoods; and retrofitted others

We also began the lead paint abatement project. Like most urban areas, we are faced with the challenge of making sure that our population is literate. To this end:

- ✓ We strengthened the partnership with our public schools by coming together in an educational summit; and
- ✓ Invited representatives from our public, private and parochial schools, as well as institutions of higher education, to come together as the Mayor's Educational Cabinet.

Also, you supported the City's educational agenda by volunteering your time and contributing your resources to activities and programs such as:

- ✓ Camp Read-A-Lot
- ✓ Performing Arts Day Camp and after school programs.

In addition the Chabot Observatory and the downtown University Center will serve as symbols of this City's commitment to educational excellence.

We also began to address the needs of our 0-5 and preschool population with projects such as:

- ✓ Oakland 2000 Ready to Learn
- ✓ Strengthened and expanded our Head Start Program
- ✓ Further addressed the needs of the infant population with Healthy Start
- ✓ You, the electorate, passed the Kids First Initiative – Measure K

Furthermore, we developed a Drop-in Information Center and Teen Program and opened a City sponsored childcare facility.

We insured the availability of hunger and homeless programs. Recreation opportunities have also been enhanced with the expansion of Fairyland and The Zoo. Galbraith Golf Course is being designed. And we continue to provide acquisition to open space with projects such as;

- ✓ King Estates
- ✓ Beacon Field
- ✓ Grizzly Peak
- ✓ Dunsmuir Ridge

Perhaps the spirit of Oakland is best seen in its many collaborative efforts that can be found in:

- ✓ Neighborhood groups, churches/Synagogues and Mosques
- ✓ Community based organizations
- ✓ Youth organizations like YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Babe Ruth Leagues
- ✓ Civic organizations like Rotary and Lake Merritt

There are the organizational collaborations such as:

- ✓ Oakland Community organizations
- ✓ The Coalition of Congregations
- ✓ New Oakland Community
- ✓ Oakland Sharing the Vision

We have done much to show that we are a caring and vibrant city.

Part of the challenge that I extend to our next Mayor is that he or she will continue to work with the Council and the City Manager to restructure our City Government so that it is lean, but efficient – and most of all – it serves the people of Oakland.

After November, the rhetoric of elections must be replaced with responsibility and implementations. I warn the candidates, and specifically my successor, of the hard lessons that I have learned. Real change is real hard.

Together with all of you, I will do all in my power to leave a strong foundation upon which our next Mayor must continue to build our city. A city that is peaceful, prosperous and proud. A city of diversity that is indeed hometown to the world.

When I began my sojourn as Mayor in 1990, I accepted the challenge of wanting to make Oakland a healthier city and I ask you to stand and all join me now in doing so again by taking The Athenian Oath:

THE ATHENIAN OATH

We will never bring disgrace on this our City by an act of Dishonesty or cowardice.

We will fight for the ideals and Sacred Things of the City Both alone and with many.

We will revere and obey the City's laws, and will do our best to incite a like reverence and respect in those above us who are prone to annul them or set them at naught.

We will strive increasingly to quicken the public's sense of civic duty.

Thus in all these ways we will transmit this City, not only not less, but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.

(This oath was takenby the young men of ancient Athens when they reached the age of 17)

CITY OF OAKLAND

CITY HALL • ONE CITY HALL PLAZA • OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

Office of the Mayor
Elihu M. Harris
Mayor

(510) 238-3141
FAX (510) 238-4731
TDD (510) 839-6451

April 24, 1998

Mr. Marc Levin
Institute of Governmental Studies
University of California, Berkeley
109 Moses Hall # 2370
Berkeley, CA 94720-2370

Mr. Levin:

Enclosed is a copy of the State of the City address delivered by Mayor Elihu M. Harris on Tuesday, April 21, 1998, per your request.

If you would like to see the program, in its entirety, please check the schedule for our city cable television station, KTOP.

Thank you for your interest. If you need further assistance, please contact me at 510-238-3141.

Sincerely,

PJ Ballard

Pj Ballard
Media Relations
Office of the Mayor

U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES
C124921120